

REFORM THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, the Endangered Species Act was put into law over 50 years ago. Of course, its purpose was to protect and recover vulnerable species to save them from population decline and extinction. That act has, to date, only recovered a couple dozen species, as there are over 1,300 listed species in the United States. The ratio of recovery indeed is a failure.

The ESA must be reformed to refocus the efforts of the Federal Government to recover animal species in a timely manner without also making it difficult for people to coexist in their habitat, as well.

We have the law now that is more likely to be used as a back door to regulate economic activity than a conservation piece of legislation.

There are numerous examples of activist groups weaponizing the ESA to use it as a business model. Indeed, they make money from the lawsuits.

For example, in my part of the State in the Central Valley, the valley elderberry longhorn beetle has had a very negative effect on the ability of Central Valley residents to maintain flood controls in the form of levees.

The residents cannot upgrade and improve the levees in this area because the ESA prevents them from doing so without very costly long-held permits. This is despite the fact that it has been recommended by Fish and Wildlife that the longhorn beetle be delisted for many years now. However, the environmental groups keep litigating on that and the Fish and Wildlife organization has pulled back from delisting the beetle.

So why do they do this? It is obvious.

If the beetle is delisted, it loses the ESA protections that make levee upgrades so difficult, expensive, and time-consuming in order to obtain the permits. The beetle has been delisted in some areas of California, such as the southern parts, but in my district, it is still listed as endangered, making it difficult to do needed flood-control projects.

Another example that has devastated the forest industry, in the West especially, is the spotted owl. It was listed many years ago. We find that the ESA has made that a weapon against forest management, and we have seen the results of that with million-acre fires. Year after year, hundreds of thousands of acres of fire have been wreaking havoc on so much of the West because we can't manage the lands because they believe there might be a spotted owl nearby, even though it isn't really the management of forests that is the problem. It is another larger owl nearby that actually devastates the spotted owl, known as the barred owl.

Also the spotted owl seems to like foresting a little closer to human ac-

tivity because it is seen as a protection from the barred owl, which devastates their population.

What is the end result?

Over 100 sawmills in California have shut down due to these protections that indeed make timber supply unavailable to the sawmills, so they go away, and instead, we have to import timber.

Now the activists themselves that sue over this, they don't live in these conditions. They live in cities far away. They don't have to live with the conditions of their economy being devastated in a small town in northern California or Oregon or other western States. So it is really easy to regulate other people somewhere else and say they have an idea about what a forest should look like when their own homes aren't subject to the threat of fire; indeed, places like Greenville, California, Canyon Dam, California, and a few years ago, a lot of us around the country heard about Paradise, California, as well. If they don't have to experience it, it is really easy for urban legislators to make regulations that continue to devastate these areas.

It is actually the local people that know best how to fight fires, how to manage the lands, and how to generate an economy that helps those communities take care of themselves and keep the people supplied with paper products and wood products that the country still wants.

So why in the world are we the number two importer of wood in the United States? We have so much that we could be utilizing. We could have managed forests that have the right ratio of trees per acre that is actually sustainable, instead of this horrific overpopulation of trees that really creates its own drought and creates a situation where they become tinderboxes, million-acre fires, ruining the habitat and killing the wildlife. Indeed, the opposite of what the Endangered Species Act is trying to do.

Also, why do we have such high food prices in this country?

Why do we even encounter food shortages in the United States of America?

Because it is hard to have a water supply in California that is a steady, stable supply.

They take away the ability to build dams and enhance our water storage, and all the water flows down the river and out to the sea. The Endangered Species Act needs to be restored to put things back on track for human needs.

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ONE YEAR SINCE UVALDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. CROCKETT) for 5 minutes.

Ms. CROCKETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the 19 children and 2 teachers murdered in Uvalde, Texas, 1 year ago today.

One excruciating year has passed for the families of those we lost at Robb Elementary that day. A year of empty childhood bedrooms and vacant desks where a child should be. One full year, and what do we have to show for it? What has this legislative body done to answer the pain of these parents with policy?

I ask myself this: Have we passed any measures on this floor that will stop the next Uvalde? The answer to that is an obvious no, we have not, because in the year since the second worst school shooting in American history, there has been 39 more.

My district is about 355 miles north of Uvalde, but the horror of that day haunts every Texan as if it happened right next door; maybe that is because it is happening next door, in a wave of gun violence that has touched every corner of Texas, in every public space we once saw as safe.

Just this month, my home of north Texas has grieved the deaths of eight Texans in a hateful act of violence at a shopping mall. That was the ninth mass shooting in Texas in 14 years. Fourteen years that lawmakers in Texas and Washington have used to loosen gun regulations.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you something: As a Texan and as an American, I am tired. I am tired of being traumatized. Texas is tired of the terror. It is time to do our jobs and legislate instead of pontificate.

The 21 Texans ripped from their families last year deserve more. The people of Uvalde who have grieved and cried and demanded change deserve more. I hope we don't come back here in a year with the same amount of nothing to show for these grieving families. I hope we can show up having passed universal background checks and a ban on the weapon of war that stole those children's lives, but if history—history that many Republicans don't believe we should have taught in schools—if history is any indication, then yet another year will pass, more lives will be lost, and politicians will put on their pastoral hats and issue prayers instead of practicing what they preach, which is to be tough on crime and to keep these weapons of war out of the hands of the many domestic terrorists that have, frankly, been radicalized by the rightwing extreme rhetoric.

Regardless of what the Republicans do or don't do, regardless of their lack of courage, I will continue doing what I do best, which is standing for commonsense solutions that will save lives.

To my colleagues, I challenge you. Let's not fail these parents and children again. The number one killer of children in this country is guns right now. It is time that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle practice what they preach and be pro-life.

Mr. Speaker, let's save some lives.

HONORING THOSE WHO HAVE MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. SANTOS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for the protection of freedom.

While the circumstances that brought our heroes to combat vary, their sacrifice is the same. They died protecting their fellow soldiers in the foxhole, the skies, and the seas. We can never fully grasp the unique story of each of our fallen, but let us never forget the patriotic lesson that our Nation's bravest remind us.

Among them, we do not pursue freedom in support of the United States, we pursue the United States in support of freedom.

On this Memorial Day as the Nation collectively pauses to remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, let us also contemplate what their sacrifice teaches us. The United States and its Constitution are more than a mutually beneficial agreement between the States. The final cause of our union is the universal principle of freedom.

Many of our heroes lost their lives protecting the freedom of their friends, family, and neighbors. Others died in defense of freedom belonging to those they had never met. The sacrifice of our fallen servicemen and -women, including thousands from the Third District of New York, reminds us of this.

Today and every day, Mr. Speaker, let us honor the lives of our fallen military personnel and let their lessons guide our every decision as we move toward a free world. Let that be what we talk about on this Memorial Day.

NATIONAL MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Virginia (Ms. SPANBERGER) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SPANBERGER. Mr. Speaker, I stand here today during National Military Appreciation Month to recognize some of Virginia's many Active-Duty servicemembers, veterans, fallen heroes, and military families.

Earlier this month, I reached out to families across Virginia's Seventh District to gather their stories of service, detailing the courage and the unwavering commitment of Virginians who have answered the call to serve our country.

As the daughter, daughter-in-law, and granddaughter of veterans, I am humbled to read some of the stories I received.

Rick Pullen of Fredericksburg shared the story of his wife, Air Force Colonel Cherie Zadlo, whom he described as the "first woman" in nearly every job she had in her 27-year career. Colonel Zadlo built an airfield, saw missiles come right at her while she was a passenger

in a military cargo plane, and was almost killed by a roadside bomb. A symbol of dedicated service to our country, her maternity uniform is a part of the Women's Military Museum collection.

Marie Atkins from Prince William shared the story of her late husband, Michael Atkins, who joined the U.S. Army when he was 17 years old. He served two tours in Vietnam, joined the Army Reserves, and served in the Gulf war. Upon returning home, Mr. Atkins married Mrs. Atkins, they had two daughters, and he enjoyed spending time with his three grandchildren. Committed to honoring his brothers in arms, he was a member of two motorcycle clubs, Rolling Thunder and Patriot Guard, which escorted fallen servicemembers to burials in military cemeteries. Mr. Atkins is now buried with military honors at Quantico National Cemetery.

Annette Wiahner from Orange shared the story of her late father, U.S. Army Air Corps fighter pilot Walter Kozial. Of her father's service in World War II, she writes: "Few people know that he was among a few brave volunteers to be the first to try shooting projectile rockets off the P-51 Mustang. They were told that it was uncertain when the rockets would detonate and that they could light up while still on the wing. Dad said to himself, 'Well, somebody has got to do it.' He had guts, and he loved his country."

I also heard from Clayton Hill from Stafford who shared the story of his great uncle Wibb Cooper, a U.S. Army veteran and doctor in the Pacific theater during World War II where my own grandfather served.

Mr. Cooper was captured by Japanese forces and survived the horrific Bataan Death March. In Clayton's words: "During that time, he stood up to his captors on behalf of other prisoners. He was decorated for his valor."

Michele from Stafford, who was born and raised in Germany, emigrated to the United States in 1980, and she shares that she always felt that service to country is the responsibility and duty of all citizens. She wrote: "When I joined the Army, it was my way of giving back to a country that was to become my new home." She served for 8 years before transitioning into civilian service working for the U.S. Government, and she retired after 35 years of total service to our country.

Alexa Rice from Prince William wrote to honor many of her loved ones; her husband serving in the U.S. Army currently on Active Duty, as well as her brother who serves in the U.S. Marine Corps. Her husband has been deployed for the past 8 months and Alexa's father served for more than 20 years in the Marine Corps. Her oldest brother served in the Marines, and her grandfather served with both the Marine Corps and the U.S. Navy.

She writes: "It is with such gratitude that these special individuals, not just in my own family, but men and women all over get the recognition and appreciation they surely earn and earned."

Virginians who are serving, have served, or love someone who is serving or has served know the true meaning of sacrifice.

We as Americans owe a debt of gratitude to every servicemember past and present who put on the uniform and defended our Nation. I will continue working in Congress to pass legislation to connect Virginia's veterans and veterans across the country with the benefits and support they deserved and have earned, and I will encourage all Americans to give thanks for the men and women in your life, in our life, in our communities who took up arms. We must all remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our great country.

Mr. Speaker, we as Americans enjoy the promise of freedom because so many brave Virginians answered the call.

WE MUST GET CONTROL OF OUR SPENDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. STEIL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, we are at a precipice as we face a debt ceiling crisis coming down in a few short days. The President doesn't seem to have a sense of urgency in the negotiations that is required to meet the moment.

Over the past 2 years, costs have gone up over 15 percent. Inflation is eating away at American paychecks. American families are finding it harder to get by. Our Nation's debt now surpasses \$31 trillion, and Washington continues to spend more. It is time to get our spending under control.

This House passed a reasonable, sensible bill to raise the debt ceiling. The Limit, Save, Grow Act moves our debt ceiling up by eliminating the growth of government, saving taxpayers' money, and growing the economy. The plan will claw back unspent COVID funds, making sure we are protecting taxpayers. It calls for able-bodied, childless adults to work a minimum of 20 hours a week in order to receive benefits. Bringing people back into the workforce will actually grow our economy and help address poverty.

We can limit government growth and spending, we can save taxpayers' money, and we can grow the economy all at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful the President of the United States understands the urgency of the moment and comes together to save taxpayers' money.

HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY TO MRS. VERNETTA JORDAN GLASS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate and pay tribute to an outstanding citizen of the United States, and I am pleased to add that she is a member of my family, the Glass family.